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A Journal of Opinion

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Ships for Children

Many times nowadays one feels as though he were walking in a dream and never more than when he thinks about the matter of the child refugees. There are hundreds of thousands of children in England facing possible death in the rain of bombs from the sky that may start at any moment. The American government has cleared away the legal obstacles to bringing as many as possible of these children to the United States. But the British haven't enough ships and our vessels are forbidden by the neutrality law from entering any British port. It would be simple, however, to dedicate a fleet of American ships to this service—ships that are now lying idle or losing money on unprofitable coastwise voyages. Not even Hitler would dare sink a shipload of child refugees. Yet day after day Congress has permitted this question to stall along through its ponderous and bumbling machinery. One feels like marching into the legislative chamber and shouting at the top of his lungs: "WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? DO YOU WANT THESE CHILDREN TO DIE?"

Depreciation or Death

What is delaying the expansion of plants necessary for large-scale munitions production? The same thing that delayed Allied plane orders for months. Yet it is a deadlock that could be broken inside of a week. While we argue and postpone, Hitler goes ahead, with a six-years' lead.

The government tries to place contracts. The manufacturer objects that he cannot fill them without investing a lot of money in new facilities. And what assurances has he that the demand for the product will continue long enough so that the investment will pan out? The government replies "We are paying plenty; you can charge up depreciation to pay for the plant, so that when the demand stops it will be written off." "Right," says the manufacturer, "but the law and Treasury rulings do not permit rapid depreciation, since that diminishes the amount remaining for profit and so reduces the tax collected. If you want to pay for the plant yourself, I'd be glad to run it for you on any fair arrangement you can suggest. Then you take it over and stand the loss, if the orders stop too soon."

The Treasury and other authorities have recently agreed on a program to allow defense industries to depreciate their new plants in five years. If after that their business continues and profit jumps to terrific size, it can be caught by the excess-profits tax. But manufacturers will not sign contracts merely on the basis of an informal pledge. They want Congress to act. And Congress is muddled, slow and obstructive. It may not act before the election. If Congress does not like this scheme, it should appropriate money to build government plants, or devise some other method. It should do so this week, laying aside conscription and all less urgent matters. It has appropriated billions, but Hitler can laugh at that as long as weapons are not being made.

Zero Hour?

As usual before he strikes, Hitler holds open the possibility that he may choose among several courses, in order to confuse the enemy. We hear that great preparations are being made for expeditions at the Channel ports and in Norway. We also hear that the

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plan is to abandon an invasion of Britain for the time being and instead to conquer the Near East and the Suez Canal, toward which Italian forces are reported to be already moving. Finally we hear that Hitler will seek merely to starve Britain out and disorganize her resistance by bombing ports and convoys. Meanwhile the British government warns the people not to relax their vigilance, that heavier raids at least are to be expected. Hitler may do all three things; it is certain that if he did interrupt British communications on sea and land he could invade the islands much more easily.

The fact remains that neither nation can win this war by attrition around the edges. Victory can come only from stabbing the heart of the enemy. The British, as their air strength grows—and they now assert that their production equals the Germans'—are taking the offensive wherever possible. If we were permitted to know the truth about the damage wreaked by the planes of both combatants we could guess more accurately what will happen.

Molotov Carries On

Many people have been predicting a drastic change in the attitude of the Soviet Union. Premier Molotov's speech indicates that it has not occurred and is not likely to occur in the near future. He reassures Germany and holds out no hope to Britain. His threatening references to Finland (because of the way she has been treating Russian sympathizers) and to the Near East indicate that Communist imperialism is likely to continue, by benefit of Hitler. Britain must meet her great test alone. If Hitler conquers, Stalin must deal with him later. The Soviet Union could not possibly cope with a victorious Third Reich in war; the indications are that for years to come the eastern dictator will consent to be a vassal of the western. Essentially, Stalin is playing the same game as Mussolini. Sir Stafford Cripps, the new British ambassador, has tried his best, but the effort came too late.

Japan on the Rampage

Two weeks ago it looked as though the United States and Great Britain were following opposite policies in the Far East. Britain was trying to appease Japan by closing the Burma Road, through which China has been receiving four-fifths of her military supplies, while we denounced that action and put under license exports of scrap metal and petroleum. (To be sure, the license system for scrap metal applied only to heavy scrap, while 85 percent of Japan's purchases are of a lighter type, but the threat to her war supplies was unmistakable.) Today, Britain seems to be coming around to our attitude. While we follow up the previous limits on exports by an embargo on aviation gasoline, England arrests distinguished Japanese apparently as a reprisal for similar action taken by Tokio.

The effort at appeasement was just about the most dismal failure in the history of diplomacy; the instant England cut the Burma Road, Japan moved a long step toward fascism, stamping out the last embers of the absurd British hope that matters could be smoothed over by negotiation. The plain fact is that Japan intends to control the whole Orient the very moment she feels strong enough—which is to say, the moment she believes Britain and the United States are too heavily engaged elsewhere to stop her. In the circumstances, Great Britain should open the Burma Road immediately. The way to hold Japan back is to keep her busy, and Chiang Kai-shek is a godsend for that purpose.

Who's Behind Lindbergh?

We refuse to get excited over the latest outburst by Colonel Lindbergh. In the past, he has shown indifference to the evils of Nazism. He has displayed no enthusiasm for the democratic way of life. At times he has seemed to believe in Hitler's Aryan nonsense. Even today, he evidently expects an immediate German victory and demands that the United States shall make friends with Hitler if it takes place. He accompanies this, however, by approving the policy of arming to the utmost. By so doing he tacitly admits what nearly everyone but himself has long known—that Hitler cannot be appeased, that his ambitions are worldwide.

That Lindbergh does not also see that our safety is bound up with that of Great Britain can be attributed to the fact that he is an expert on just one subject. That subject is flying airplanes, not statesmanship or speechmaking. What we should really like to know is who suggests to him the views he expresses; who helps him prepare his speeches.

Willkie in the Gallup Poll

If you read only the headlines, you may have been startled by the report of the Gallup poll a few days ago saying that Willkie would win a majority in the Electoral College if the election were to be held at once. The details make the situation seem less serious for the New Deal. Roosevelt still has a popular majority, which becomes a minority in the Electoral College only because his support is so nearly unanimous in certain states, mostly in the South. The Gallup figures show that while there are seven states for Roosevelt by a margin of 3 percent or less, fourteen of Willkie's states are in that category. Three percent is a margin far too narrow for safety; Dr. Gallup himself admits a possible error in his poll of that much. The Republican strength in the Northwest is probably more McNary than Willkie and may dwindle as the voters realize that on some of the chief questions of the day these two men are in complete opposition. Dr. Gallup recalls that Landon led Roosevelt in 1936 in the polls

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taken early in the campaign, although he finally carried only two states.

At present Willkie has two great advantages: first, he is a "new face," and people have not got tired of him through seeing his picture too often and hearing too much from and about him on the radio and otherwise. Our modern means of communication are excessive; they tend to wear out our popular heroes quickly. Second, Willkie's mistakes are still all ahead of him. We know his views on few subjects and every time he takes a stand on anything he will get into trouble. This is one election where preliminary polls mean little. A great European crisis might reëlect Roosevelt, or a sudden ending of the war might conceivably help Willkie. The campaign will last about a hundred days; prophecies made now, in this swiftly changing era, are worthless.

Catching Spies

Almost everything was right in the letter from President Roosevelt read by Attorney General Jackson to the state authorities. There is a real danger from Fifth Column activities, but it is a danger no more of sabotage by unknown industrial workers than from traitors or appeasers in high places. The work of combating it should be properly apportioned between the states and the federal government. It is a job not for amateur detectives or vigilantes but for professional and trained police. It should not be attended by publicity; through public turmoil the dangerous agents escape, while false and wholesale charges create the very dissension that the enemy desires. Mr. Jackson might well have added that the most effective enemy agents may often be found among those who pose as super-patriots and denounce others recklessly.

The keystone of this admirable structure, however, is weak. The professional anti-spy activities of the federal government are entrusted to J. Edgar Hoover. Mr. Hoover is distrusted almost unanimously by the liberal and progressive forces of the country, and with good reason. He has in the past used those very devices of publicity and violations of civil liberties against which the President warns. A governmental detective force is a necessary evil; no precautions to keep it within bounds can be too careful.

German Agent

Dr. Gerhard Westrick, Hitler's emissary to American big business, is accredited by our State Department as a commercial counselor to the German Embassy. In the few months since his arrival in this country he has provided us with a fair working sample of Nazi activity under cover of diplomatic immunity. In his movements from residence to residence and in his application for an auto license he has left a trail of serious misinformation, especially when he described himself as an employee of one of the directors of the Texas Corporation. His "guests" have included a humble mechanic from the strategic area around Buffalo, an employee of the Eastman Kodak Company whose father manages the company's Berlin plant, Philip D. Wagoner, president of Underwood, Elliott, Fisher Company and Torkild Rieber, chairman of the board of the Texas Corporation and Franco's greatest supplier of oil during the Spanish civil war.

The lesson in all this it seems to us, has just been indicated by Attorney General Jackson in his warning that the Nazis will make their strongest appeal to America's business men. We feel that Dr. Westrick has outworn his welcome in this country. And the stockholders of Mr. Rieber's Texas Corporation have indicated their fear, if not their disapproval, of Mr. Rieber's secret sessions with the Nazi agent by hastening to unload their holdings to the point where the stock has shown a considerable loss on the Exchange.

Editors Must Eat

Mrs. J. David Stern, wife of the well known liberal publisher of newspapers in Philadelphia and elsewhere, has lately been having trouble with her help. Mrs. Stern tried to resuscitate St. Nicholas Magazine on a shoestring and had the happy thought of employing a number of editorial assistants without pay until the enterprise got on its feet—a plan roughly similar to the unlimited rehearsals required of actors in the bad old days before Equity stepped in. When after weeks or months her sub-editors pointed out to Mrs. Stern that they were only human, and addicted to the bad habit of eating, the only solution she could think of was to accept their resignations.

We never heard of a better case for unionization of white-collar workers. The Book and Magazine Guild, CIO, has an ironclad contract with many publishers, including The New Republic, which would prevent their using Mrs. Stern's tactics even if they wanted to. Whether it was innocent inexperience or something else that led Mrs. Stern to make her extraordinary proposal, we hope in future she will hire all her help through the excellent employment service of the B. and M.G. They will save her from any more bright ideas of the same sort, if she needs saving.

Sprains and Bruises

Among the tragedies of shattered cities, ruined nations and homeless peoples, the press has found space in recent months to notice a few obscure wartime calamities. Miss Geraldine Babcock had to cancel her début dinner-dance because of "war conditions and the illness of her elder sister." Ambassador William C. Bullitt, Ambassador Anthony J. Drexel Biddle and Negro band-leader Coleman Hawkins lost their European villas to German bombs. Ambassador Bullitt suffered more than the others because his was a genuine white marble chateau. He also lost 150,000 American

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cigarettes consigned to him, which disappeared at the French border and which the German authorities have not yet been able to locate. The Democratic Party found itself forced to give up its campaign song, "Happy Days Are Here Again," because "so many unfortunate people are suffering the horrors of war." A Welsh air-raid warden was run over by a police car during a German bombing raid. The president of Finchley's reported a decrease in the popularity of walking sticks; he blames the war for a lack of male jauntiness. United States Minister to Eire fell down a twelve-foot well while inspecting his legation grounds for a suitable spot for an air-raid shelter. He suffered a sprained ankle and body bruises. In a time of impersonal suffering these minor catastrophes seem real and almost reassuring, like iron lamp posts in a London fog.

News Notes of a Week

The Pétain government at Vichy took another leaf from Hitler's book and confiscated the fortunes of many prominent exiles, among them Baron Rothschild, because they refused to come back and explain their strange dislike for living in a fascist state. . . . Mayor Houde of Montreal was interned for refusing to comply with the Canadian draft bill, which he called a violation of the government's pledge. . . . Germany announced that her war dead would be buried on the battlefields where they fell, rather than at home, "to provide places of holy pilgrimage." . . . Britain added Spain and Portugal to her blockade, which now includes all Europe. . . . Hitler promised Mussolini that Italian troops could have a part in the invasion of England, but guaranteed no more than a one-horse-one-rabbit ratio. . . . Germany replied to British boasts that the Hamburg waterfront had been "pulverized" by taking correspondents on a personally conducted tour that did not include large portions of the waterfront. . . . The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, thoroughly overpublicized, "traveled light" with only fifteen pieces of luggage sent on ahead, and fifty-two bags, four dogs, a limousine, a trailer, a wine-hamper and a sewing machine with them.

Pennsylvania Railroad officials blamed "an engineman's mental lapse" for the death of forty-three in a railroad collision. Excuse it, please. . . . Eight WPA employees in New York, among them the writer Maxwell Bodenheim, were suspended pending investigation to determine whether they were members of the Communist Party, contrary to their sworn affadavits. . . . "Pittsburg Phil" Strauss, gang gunman charged with murder, refused to be shaved for his trial on the grounds that it was a violation of the Bill of Rights. . . . The FBI began an inquiry into the sale of the former Communist organ, The Daily Worker, to three elderly ladies. . . . Alfred E. ("Hiker") Smith took another walk, his quadrennial constitutional.

Common Sense on Conscription

WE BELIEVE it is time to stop the discussion concerning the general principles of conscription, and get down to some of the crucial details. Every indication shows that an overwhelming majority of citizens would favor conscription (and in time of peace, too) in order to raise and train an army adequate for defense of this country, provided they thought such a method were necessary. What puzzles them is whether conscription is being advocated for other purposes than to raise an army, or whether those who advocate it know how big an army we really need, or whether conscription is desirable to obtain an army of the requisite size, or how soon that army could be equipped even if it were encamped, or how many need to be registered in order to select it.

Certainly the present war seems to teach that the need is not for large masses of cannon fodder so much as for relatively small and highly mobile forces, well equipped and highly trained. The armies which the Reichswehr used as the spearheads of its attacks were numbered by the hundred thousand rather than by the million. Their superiority was in numbers not of men but of modern weapons and in ability to use them with perfect coördination. The rest of Germany's great forces have been utilized to hold inactive fronts or to complete the organization behind the lines, or to occupy territory already conquered.

This is a large country with long boundaries, but it is not subject to surprise attack, nor to assault on many fronts at once. We are not, according to the President, contemplating sending an army abroad, though everyone recognizes the possibility that we might have to land troops somewhere else on this continent if Hitler were to prepare a campaign against us. Will the strategists tell us how many men we need, in view of the genuine possibilities, and why? Will those in charge of supply tell us how soon a maximum program of guns, tanks, planes and the rest can provide equipment for soldiers? Then we shall know better whether we need to register everybody between 18 and 65, or between 21 and 45, or between 21 and 31, or none at all. And we shall know whether those who want conscription at once want it in order to get soldiers into uniforms or to get minds into uniform.

In the present welter of opinion without basis in fact, we should guess that the recommendations of Major George Fielding Eliot, whose writings on defense are known to the readers of The New Republic, were about as sensible as anyone's. He opposes the Burke-Wadsworth bill as unsuited to the present situation. The size of the permanent standing army at which he would aim is 750,000, with adequate reserves. This should be composed partly of volunteers and partly of conscripts. He would make certain upward

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adjustments of pay. The term of training he believes cannot wisely be less than eighteen months. And men who have undergone training should be able by re-enlistment to shorten but not eliminate their liability to service in the reserve. Whether these and other details in his letter to Senator Lodge are correct we do not know. What we do know is that discussion of this kind is what is needed to further any intelligent dealing with the subject.

If a program like this is advisable, then it is wasteful folly to register every man between the ages of 18 and 65—just to obtain less than 500,000 conscripted soldiers. Major Eliot suggests stopping at 45, admitting that the major purpose of going this far is to serve "morale." But the principle is well established that every man, no matter what his age, is liable to call in case of real need. What we want now is a practical, workable measure, not a significant but time-and-money-consuming gesture. It might easily be possible to fill the ranks of such an army as this with volunteers alone—though it would doubtless be more difficult to select just the skills required. Have we time to try it? That depends on the time required by the army to absorb, train and equip a given number of recruits. To order too many men in too short a period is just as reckless economy in building an army as to order—as we did in the last war—millions of pairs of shoes that could never be used.

Destroyers for Britain!

IN THE MATTER of destroyers for Britain, the facts are few and simple. The British navy has suffered substantial losses of destroyers during the war, though most of her ships that are out of commission have not been sunk but damaged and are laid up for repairs. She needs additional destroyers particularly if Hitler is about to begin an attempt at invasion, but they are almost equally necessary to fight a blockade and an effort to starve the British out. The United States, on the contrary, has an enormous number of destroyers, probably more than all the other navies of the world combined. Many of them date back to World War days and are obsolete in the most literal sense for any navy whose need is not of the greatest. We have more destroyers than are required for a well rounded American fleet; we have more than we shall need in the visible future at any time unless the British fleet should be destroyed or immobilized, in which case we should be in such deep trouble that we should hardly notice the absence of another twenty-five or fifty ships.

The British want to buy some of our obsolete destroyers; this requires a special act of Congress and thus far that act has not been forthcoming.

It is difficult to comment reasonably upon the attitude of mind which refuses to get excited about this situation or to feel that there is any need for haste. It is quite true that Britain might be defeated within the next few weeks, before the destroyers could be sent across the Atlantic and British crews trained to handle them. Yet even if it were practically certain that this would happen, the consequences to the United States of a British defeat would be so terrible that the chance would probably be worth taking. In fact, however, up to August 6 at least, it seemed quite possible that Hitler might delay the invasion of England until the autumn's bad weather would come to the help of the beleaguered fortress, or that he might even choose instead an attempt at blockade and starvation. In that case, as we have said, the American destroyers would be equally useful.

If Britain goes down, the United States will be the last remaining important democracy in the world and the certain object of an attempt at destruction by the fascists. Some of the facts about such a struggle are outlined by Bruce Bliven in his article in this issue, and they make grim reading. The need is not only for old naval vessels but for every other kind of equipment which we can supply, and which certain forces in Congress and in the Army and Navy seem so reluctant to release. As General Pershing has just pointed out, to help keep Great Britain alive would be worth many billions of dollars to the United States, since it might, at the lowest terms, make the difference between arming to the teeth over a long period of years and a return to world sanity. Yet we are not asked to spend many billions for Great Britain, or anything at all. We are asked merely to sell some naval vessels which are literally obsolete, fulfilling the precedent of the law already laid down for military material. To make this sale does not alter our legal status as a non-belligerent; it would parallel the sale of airplanes and guns permitted by the revised neutrality law of last fall.

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Not Enough Jitters

I HAVE HEARD a good many people say that the United States is now suffering quite unnecessarily from the jitters. To me, the exact opposite seems true. While here and there one sees hysterical people who need a dash of cold water in the face, it is my feeling that the great majority of Americans are far too complacent. They appear to be still living in the sort of fool's paradise inhabited by the British and the French until May 10.

A surprisingly large number of people are saying and writing that Britain can probably hold out against Germany, but that even if she does not, the United States has little to fear. We are still protected by our oceans. Anyhow, it will take Hitler a decade to clean up the mess in Europe. Before that length of time, something will have happened, such as a revolution in Germany, or a war between Hitler and Stalin. In any case, Hitler has no real designs against us. He wouldn't be crazy enough to try to rule the whole world, would he?

In my judgment he is exactly crazy enough to intend to rule the whole world. I am certain that his plans are laid to precisely that end. Unless the Americans rouse themselves from their sleep, I think he has an excellent chance of accomplishing his purpose.

Please don't write in and tell me that I am being defeatist and that it serves Hitler's purposes when people talk this way. Hitler certainly wants his enemies —and that phrase means everybody on earth who hasn't given in to him—to be defeatist. But he also wants them to lull themselves with false confidence, to make no real effort to prepare in a military way. We have heard a little too much about Hitler's psychological weapons; we are perhaps overlooking the fact that these are only preliminary and accessory to his use of actual military strength. Nothing will stop his guns, tanks and airplanes except other people's guns, tanks and airplanes. He will never be halted by guns and tanks that are "on order," or by blueprints for the fastest planes in the world, or by troops who will be ready six months or a year after they are needed.

I don't wish to be alarmist about the possibility that Great Britain may be successfully invaded; certainly her chances look somewhat better than they did three or four weeks ago. Yet the cold fact remains that Hitler still has a superiority in airplanes of three or four to one. He has a superiority in manpower that is certainly three to one. His shipbuilding resources are today enormous, commanding as he does the yards of all Europe. The effort to blockade England is far easier than during the last war, with his present control of the entire coastline opposite the British Isles. The careful experts do not give Great Britain more than a 50-percent chance of holding out. If she were to succumb, Canada is the only remaining part of the Empire that could put up a serious resistance, and that chiefly because of her proximity to the United States. Some of the British fleet might escape and base itself on Singapore for a long period of time, but such an action would be of little strategic importance. So far as American or British ability to stop her is concerned, Japan would be in control of the Orient and reduction of the final British citadels in that area would follow.

Assuming that the worst should happen, what reason is there to believe that Hitler would then turn his attention to the United States? To that the best answer is, Why wouldn't he?

It ought to be perfectly clear by now that Hitler thinks of himself as one of the breed of world conquerors, Alexander, Caesar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon. Indeed, by the test of the number of lives influenced for the worse, he is already the greatest dictator who ever lived. You do not need the statements in his own writings, the songs the Nazis sing, the innumerable dark hints in the Nazi literature, to know that this is how Hitler's mind, and the minds of the coterie around him, are running. To imagine that such a movement as his would limit its own ambitions, simply shows a lack of imagination. Moreover, in its organization, its domestic economy, its ideology and culture, it must continue on its course of aggression and expansion, in order to survive at all. Once it stops, it begins to disintegrate. If it should get control of the whole world, on that day its fatal decline would begin. I, for one, don't want to see Nazism defeated by such an expensive and circuitous route.

I think it is safe to assume therefore that Hitler wants to conquer and subjugate the United States, and every other country, precisely as he has conquered and subjugated all his immediate neighbors. His promises to the contrary are absolutely worthless, as much so as his pledges to Austria and Poland. The question of paramount importance is: How much time have we in which to prepare?

This interrogation no one can answer definitely. Much depends upon how long Great Britain manages to hold out (the hypothesis of course assumes her ultimate defeat). Much more depends upon the route he would employ for a military invasion. Presumably he would come across the South Atlantic, using the Azores, the coast of South America and the Caribbean as stepping stones, and certainly meeting heavy opposition from the American fleet and from our naval bases at Panama and Puerto Rico.

The obvious strategy is for Hitler to join with Japan in a "squeeze play" against the United States.

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He should have no difficulty in persuading Japan to coöperate with him in an enterprise which, at minimum risk to herself, would remove the threat of the last Anglo-Saxon interference in the Orient (remember, the preliminary hypothesis is a British defeat). Japan might take no more active part than Italy did against France. By threatening us, she could keep a big part of our fleet immobilized in the Pacific.

It is not alarmist to count up the resources both sides would be able to muster in the event of such a situation. If we leave the British fleet out of the picture entirely, Japan and Germany combined would certainly muster formidable strength, even remembering the distance from their bases of supply at which they would be forced to operate. If we assume that the United States would have the help of all the rest of North and South America plus Australia and New Zealand, and that Hitler would have at his disposal all the resources of Europe except Russia, we get a startling picture. The fascists' naval strength would exceed our own by something like 20 to 12. In present aerial strength their advantage is so great as to be fantastic. Their merchant marine available would be four times our own. The total population resources are more than three times greater. Production of iron is a third greater. Production of electric energy is a sixth greater. Shipyard capacity is about seven times greater.

These figures do not mean very much. Wars are not won or lost by adding up potential resources, but in battle areas. I am not a military expert and am not posing as one. I wish to make only three points: first, that if England is defeated, the United States is in great danger of armed attack; second, that this attack would come at the earliest possible moment Hitler could manage it, and third, that nearly everyone is overestimating the time he would need to get ready.

That he would strike as quickly as possible I think we may take for granted. With England out of the way, there would be only two serious threats to his domination of the world—the United States and Soviet Russia. He evidently believes, and I think correctly, that Russia is not likely to get much stronger in the next year or two. He can pick off the Soviet Union at his leisure—though the struggle may be a difficult one. But the United States is embarking on a vast program of military preparedness. Never again will it be so easy to attack us with hope of success. Hitler's strategy should therefore be to strike as soon as possible.

I believe those who say that it will take him three or four years to get ready are engaging in wishful thinking on a life and death matter. They overlook the possibilities of speed implicit in a totalitarian economy. I cannot pretend to create a time-table, but it seems to me reasonable to say we shall be lucky if we get as much as a year in which to prepare.

Under these circumstances, what is happening in Washington is an extraordinary spectacle. Our defense effort did not really begin until about June 1, when for the first time it got into our heads that Germany might conceivably win the war and destroy or immobilize the British fleet. What have we done since then? Congress has voted a lot of money, a great deal more than can be spent effectively. Some other people have worked hard and loyally in the interest of national defense, and I would not belittle their activities.

Yet the sad truth remains that the defense program appears to be stalling and that nobody in authority seems to care very much. The Associated Press reported on July 30 that $55,000,000 in contracts for military airplanes had been cleared by the National Advisory Defense Commission between June 6 and July 17 but had not yet been signed. Says the Associated Press:

> The army was reported reliably to be scaling down pending aircraft orders to the present level of production capacity in the belief that plant expansions needed for larger orders might be delayed indefinitely. Well informed quarters also said that signing of several contracts had been postponed to await congressional action [on tax legislation]. There was a growing conviction in army and industry circles that Congress might wait until after the November election to enact the defense-tax policy change, which manufacturers deem an essential prerequisite to plant expansion.

I am not suggesting of course that the manufacturers are right and their opponents are wrong. On the contrary, I feel that this is no time for anybody to insist on fat profits or even "adequate" ones, and the man who slows up the job of preparedness *for any reason whatever* comes close to being guilty of treason. Meanwhile our army continues to practise the maneuvers which were out of date in 1918. Little is being done to set up belt-line production for military equipment. We are talking about conscripting 2,000,000 men for an army whose character no one seems to know, to fight in unspecified places under unspecified conditions.

Mr. Knudsen, an able and conscientious man, spent weeks mainly on the problem of amortization of new industrial plants and weeks more mainly on the problem of the Ford-Rolls Royce aircraft-engine contract. Despite repeated and desperate warnings, we have almost totally failed to accumulate a "stock pile" of needed raw materials obtained abroad, such as rubber and tin. The House of Representatives has just refused to give the President authority to take over and operate plants needed for national defense, on the ground, according to Representative Vinson, that the authority is too sweeping for peacetime. Representative Vinson thinks this is peacetime! There is no adequate correlation of efforts at the top; responsibility has been queerly allocated. There are confusion, cross purposes, apathy, complacence. Congress, the administration, the army and navy, are working on the assumption that we need a rather muddled and uncertain type of defense along about 1944 or 1945. I hope they are right; I am sure they are wrong.

BRUCE BLIVEN

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The Conscientious Objector

They were manacled nine hours a day in standing posture to the bars of the dungeon. When their bonds were unlocked they fell exhausted to the floor. They slept on a plank that was crawling with vermin. Every alternate two weeks they were given a diet of bread and water.

A rope was tied around their necks and the other end looped through a railing in the upper tier of cells. They were hoisted off their feet until they turned purple and were at the point of collapse. The rope was then removed and the men fell to their knees. Guards brought in a hose and a stream of icy water played on them until they became unconscious. After that, they were carried downstairs and dumped into the cage again.

They were put in a pitch-black dungeon below water level. Water dripped from the walls. Clad only in their underwear, and tortured by a straitjacket and ball-and-chain, they were kept in the dungeon for five days, spending thirty-six hours manacled to the bars. Two of them contracted pneumonia and died in the prison hospital.

THESE ARE NOT CASE HISTORIES imported from Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. They represent torture, American style. These men were United States citizens who, in the World War, refused to admit the right of the state to dispose of them regardless of their personal convictions. They were members of the small band of conscientious objectors, "the bedraggled fringe on the robe of war . . . sore thumb on the military fist," who refused or limited obedience to a wartime government.

To the military they were "lousy rats." To the intelligence testers, they were psychiatric cases. To a wartime public, they were lunatics or traitors.

But, since the last war, a growing resistance to wartime methods has set in. If the present European war draws this country into conflict abroad, the number of objectors to conscription for war service will probably increase tenfold. This estimate is more than borne out in England today. Of the men called to fight, one out of fifty has claimed exemption as a conscientious objector to war. In the World War the proportion was approximately one in 560.

If measures are not adopted by Congress now, while we are at peace, for handling war resisters sanely and without rancor, the confusion, delay and frequent inhumanity which marked our treatment of objectors in the World War may be repeated on an increased scale. These measures should provide alternative service for those refusing military service. They should also provide means for determining in peacetime who among our citizens of draft age are sincere objectors.

Among the body of American objectors in the next war, as in the last, will be representatives of the more than a million members of pacifist churches "recognized" to be opposed to war, of whom the Friends are the most significant group. Added strength may come from the membership of the many leading denominations who have asked that their members also be granted the same privileges of objection to war service.

But the largest group will be the so-called "political" objectors, who base their resistance to conscription for war on moral and intellectual rather than religious grounds. A minority in the World War, this group will now draw on the constantly growing numbers of young men who believe today's need is "not to die bravely but to live reasonably." They will oppose service on the ground that a war that is not strictly defensive cannot possibly achieve any desirable social end.

If we again use conscription to raise an army, we must also adjust our wartime society to provide for war resisters in a sane manner, without hatred or hysteria. As a starting point, we can take the methods used in the World War, bearing in mind that the modicum of legislation then passed concerning objectors was in force only for the duration of the conflict. Beyond providing us with a precedent, it has no bearing on future treatment of objectors. In the army's plans for the next war, contained in the War Department's seven industrial-mobilization bills now ready to be rubberstamped by Congress upon our entry into war, it is simply stated that:

> Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in a *combatant* capacity in any of the public armed forces of the United States, who is found to be a member of any *well recognized* religious sect whose creed or principles *forbid* its members to participate in war *in any form*, if the *conscientious* holding of such belief by such person shall be established under such *regulations* as the President may prescribe; but no such person shall be relieved from service in such capacity as the President shall declare *non-combatant*. (Italics ours.)

This exemption is not a recognition of the rights of individual conscience, but simply a concession to the religious groups which in the past have been unwilling to furnish soldiers. Even this exemption may not be valid, for another provision states:

> Nothing in this Act shall be construed as preventing the President, when in his discretion the national interest requires it, from calling immediately for duty in the public armed forces, any person subject to registration who is liable to service, *however classified* and wherever residing.

At the beginning of the World War there was no established method of treating objectors. The Revolution, the War of 1812 (at which time Daniel Webster issued his fiery denunciation of conscription) the war with Mexico and the Spanish-American War were

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fought with the regular army and volunteers. The draft was introduced in the Civil War and was highly unpopular, although it was not enforced so stringently as it was in the World War.

It was not until March, 1918, that President Wilson finally issued his ruling on what constituted non-combatant service under the Selective Service Act, for which objectors who refused to bear arms were eligible. It was not until the same time that objectors who refused all military service were released for relief and reconstruction work with the American Friends' Service Committee abroad; it was also only after the second draft that others were furloughed to work on farms and in factories under contract to the government. The rest, chiefly "political" objectors, were sentenced to prison by courts-martial for terms of from five years to life. A few were condemned to death but none was executed. Yet it was not until November, 1920, two years after the Armistice, that the last objector was freed.

The alternatives to military service were unsatisfactory. They did not exhaust the possibilities for usefully employing the objector. For instance, the objector who refused all military service was often reluctant to accept either farm or factory work on the ground that he did not wish to aid in the production of what might become or be construed as materials of war; or because, by accepting such service, he might free other men for the army. Others refused relief and reconstruction work in war areas, believing that by helping to relieve belligerent governments of responsibility for civilian populations in distress, they would be releasing their greatest energies for war. Some, the "absolutists," refused all coöperation with the government in order to oppose the principle of conscription. For these no provision was made beyond prison cells.

What other alternatives exist? In addition to farm and factory furloughs and work with the Friends abroad, objectors who resist both combatant and non-combatant military service could be released to "services of national importance." These services could take the form of necessary public improvements such as road building, forestry, land reclamation, housing, civilian hospital service and refugee-relief work at home.

Those who refuse any work even indirectly aiding in the conduct of the war could be permitted to set themselves up in coöperative subsistence projects. The Friends, by the close of the World War, had successfully organized on this basis a group awaiting transfer abroad for relief and reconstruction service.

Work for those refusing all military service in wartime is not, however, the major problem in dealing with objectors. The greatest single task lies in determining who, among those seeking exemption from war service, are sincere in their resistance. President Wilson, when asked to make provision for objectors who were not members of pacifist churches, refused "for fear the unconscientious would escape." The boards set up to test objectors' sincerity in the World War were either antagonistic to their cause or, at best, lacking in the sensitive insight which their task required.

Determining a man's sincerity is difficult always, but in time of war, in an atmosphere of prejudice and emotion, it is almost impossible. The intelligent course is to accept the lesser of the two difficulties by requiring, in peacetime, public registration of those who will refuse military service in the event of war. No better test of the objector's integrity can be imposed. Those not sincere in their objection to war service would not be likely to register. They would count, rather, on exemption from the draft on grounds of physical disability, occupation or family responsibility; or upon evasion. Insincere registrants would be quickly weeded out in case of war; few men without earnest convictions could stand the bitter criticism and abuse which are the objector's portion in wartime.

Provision for registration of objectors is, however, not enough. An organization is also necessary to ensure its just and careful administration. This should consist of a civilian board entrusted with a twofold function: to pass on applications for registration submitted to it; and, where application is accepted, to assign, before war starts, service acceptable to the objector.

This civilian board would necessarily be under government control, but—as a guarantee of fair hearing for applicants—it should be entirely divorced from the War Department. Its direction should be shared by a group of nationally respected laymen appointed by Congress.

As a condition to appearing before the board, each applicant claiming exemption from future war service would be required to give full information concerning his grounds for objection in order that his integrity might be established. If adjudged sincere, he would be eligible for registration, thereby becoming automatically exempt from combatant service. He would, however, be asked to accept non-combatant service and assigned to a non-combatant branch of the army. If his convictions did not permit him to serve the military in any capacity, he would then, on the basis of his education, training and experience, be assigned to suitable non-military service or, if an "absolutist," to a subsistence project.

We must, if we do not wish to repeat our mistakes of twenty-three years ago, recognize the courageous determination that distinguishes the objector's cause. We must, while there is yet time for unbiased thinking, invite Congress to institute, along with its other provisions for war, some measure which will meet the problem of this defenseless minority; a measure which will eliminate hatred, misunderstanding and passion, and which will be an example of democratic tolerance of which we can be proud.

RUTH FOSDICK JONES and RUFUS HORTON JONES

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Is There a Führer in the House?

On a street-corner in New York's Yorkville section, a crowd of almost a thousand is gathered before a covered wagon. Most of the people are Irish or German—grim, worn, middle-aged. Salesmen weave through the gathering hawking Father Coughlin's Social Justice, Pelley's Liberation and the Bund's Free American. From a platform on the back of the prairie schooner, a candidate for the United States Congress is speaking:

"Whose idea is this war?"

The crowd, well rehearsed, shouts back the answer: "Jews!"

"Who owns the press and radio?"

"Jews!"

Joe McWilliams, führer of the American Destiny Party, pauses, holds up his hand and yells, "I am the anti-Jewish candidate for Congress!" There are boos and cheers. Somewhere in the rear of the audience a man screams hysterically, "He sounds like Hitler! Stop him! My God, I can't stand this!" A detective takes the sobbing man by the arm and leads him out of the crowd.

As the 1940 congressional elections approach, people in a dozen states are listening as the Pied Pipers of patriotism toot their campaign speeches to fascist music. These men hope to use the floor of Congress as a rostrum from which to spout anti-democratic propaganda. To a man they are anti-Semitic, anti-labor, pro-Hitler, pro-Mussolini, pro-Franco. Every one of them would be glad to take over the country and lead it out of the maze of democracy.

The main fascist mouthpiece in the House today is Jacob Thorkelson of Montana. The former Butte physician has the endorsement of nearly every would-be führer in the country. Pelley, Winrod, Christians, Castorina, Hudson and dozens of others laud him in their publications and have him address their meetings. Christians, leader of the Crusader White Shirts, passes out franked copies of Thorkelson's anti-Semitic speeches. And Pelley has published one book and two pamphlets by the Montana medicine man.

Thorkelson has repeatedly read anti-Semitic propaganda into The Congressional Record, including quotations from the discredited Protocols of Zion and the admittedly forged Colonel House letter. One bit of Thorkelsoniana from The Record reads like a bulletin from Herr Goebbels' office: "Democracies are always weak, for there is not one democracy which has survived for any length of time."

McWilliams may never get the chance to stand beside his friend Thorkelson on the floor of the House. He must collect 3,000 signatures for the petition to put his name on the ballot and the American Destiny Party has about 350 members. Of course many more than that support McWilliams (his street meetings have drawn as many as 2,000), but it remains to be seen how many of them are willing to place their names and addresses on his petition. McWilliams and James Stewart, vice-führer of the Destiny Party who is running for Congress in the Bronx, were recently convicted for inciting to disturbance of the peace by violent speeches against the Jews.

Elsewhere throughout the country there may be others on the Destiny ticket. George Deatherage would like to run in West Virginia. Deatherage, head of the Knights of the White Camellia, has been trying for years to bring all the fascist groups into one central organization. In his News Bulletin, Deatherage once wrote: "The time has arrived for a practical plan of government to be offered to the nation. That plan is that of the fascist state. None other is strong enough to save the nation from complete destruction at the hands of international control."

On the West Coast, Kenneth A. Brown, who ran a poor second in the Republican primary, now plans to run on the Destiny ticket. A year ago Brown was broke and working on a small farm. Several months ago he shelled out $400 to buy four pages in The Oregon Voters' Bulletin, a pamphlet which is distributed to every registered voter. Prospective candidates buy space in The Bulletin to introduce themselves to the electorate. Brown was the only one to take the maximum space allowed each candidate. He recognized the pamphlet as a perfect propaganda organ and filled his space with bitter anti-Semitic commentary.

In Michigan, Louis B. Ward, editorial director of Social Justice, has resigned as Father Coughlin's press-agent and lobbyist to seek the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate. Ward, who helped Coughlin launch the National Union for Social Justice, ran for the House in 1936 and lost by a slim margin. Since then the palavering priest has collected a considerable following around Detroit, and Ward's chances are improved. He recently wrote a series of articles suggesting that this country toss its present labor organizations overboard and set up a union system based on Italy's corporate state.

Campaigning for reëlection this fall are several Representatives who, if not among America's fascists, are close to it. John C. Schafer, Wisconsin Republican, has spoken at German-American Bund meetings and has repeatedly sprung to the defense of Father Coughlin. Also from Wisconsin is Lewis D. Thill, a close friend of Thorkelson who copies the Montanan's habit of reading propaganda into The Congressional Record.

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On March 14, 1940, Thill read into The Record an article supplied him by the German Library of Information, Nazi propaganda agency in this country.

Martin L. Sweeney, Democratic House member from Ohio, has been a frequent speaker at Coughlin's meetings. Sweeney is now fighting a number of lawsuits involving anti-Semitism.

The fascist white hope in California is T. W. Hughes, Republican candidate and boss of the Silent Voters' League. The League, a companion organization of the German-American National Alliance, holds Sunday evening forums which are 100-percent pro-Hitler.

No doubt half a dozen names will be added to the list before November. These men constitute an ominous phase of the fascist movement in the United States, which is beginning to parallel the development of the National Socialist movement in Germany. There the Nazi organization achieved no power until it managed to get its men elected to public office. By obtaining seats in the Reichstag, Hitler cloaked his gang of street-corner toughs with a mantle of respectability and from the floor of the German legislature Nazis got a chance to pull the propaganda stunts outlined in "Mein Kampf." This year the fascists are making their first widespread bid for seats in Congress. It is important for the voters to be able to spot these men, know their records and know what they stand for.

MIKE LANDON

Exile and Wars

In 1938, the poet Shelley Wang said goodbye to his friends in England—including Sylvia Townsend Warner, Valentine Ackland, Innes Jackson and others who had translated some of his work—and went back to fight for China. In the spring of 1938, a little collection of his poems, in Chinese and English, was badly printed in Chungking. So far as we know, only one copy of the book reached this country; the poems that follow are selected from it. In July of last year, Wang was killed at the front, in Honan Province. — THE EDITORS

I

Parting with my family, crisis in my country: both evils befall me.
Holding back my tears I try to console my wife but find no words.
My mother is in the other corner of the universe, my brother in prison.
With a worn-out writing-brush I come to middle age.

II

How is one worth a bowl of rice by selling writings?
Endangered by life yet craving to live I left my country.
But history has always been made by swords and guns,
Those fighting on paper are nothing but dogs and horses—
The huntsman halloos them on.

III

The delights of argument, the greed for wine-cups, belong now to another world;
From all my life's hoarded pleasures only the love of books is left.
What the vandals of civil war spared from my library was sold, they say by weight.
I am anxious for my wretched ten thousand volumes—whether they found the right master.

IV

Now I am going home.
When I came away,
China was a wretched house,
Blown by wind, ravaged by storm and rain,
Plundered by robbers.
Economy, politics, culture,
All were loose and strewn like sand.
The Great Wall of many thousand years
Collapsed in a single day.
Only the Yellow River groaned lamentingly,
Carrying mud and sand for thousands of *li* down to the ocean.

Today, in an ocean of blood,
A new state is being established;
Every drop of blood is a brick,
Every will of a single man and woman is a stone
That will build another Great Wall to pierce the clouds—
A wall of peace and justice.
I am going,
going to add a brick,
add a stone.
It is not that the Great Wall cannot be built without me,
But because I cannot remain outside the Wall.

V

We are parting.
Mountains and oceans cannot divide us,
Only language can separate people.
Neither distance nor language can divide our spirits.
There is not a great difference between English and Chinese,
The distance is only in the contents of a language.
The language of friendship is warmth;
The language of justice is bravery;
The language of peace is resistance.
Real language is spelt with smiles, frowns and actions
Not only letters and sounds.
We cannot understand the language of invaders,
But nothing can separate us from you.
Neither distance nor language can divide our spirits.
Goodbye, friends!

SHELLEY WANG

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Washington Notes

For Want of Sixty Destroyers

THE ENERGIES of the administration higher-ups last week were spent chiefly on the problem of the sixty destroyers that Britain wants to buy from us. An assault on England was momentarily expected; perhaps by the time these Notes are printed it will have begun. Administration officials felt themselves in the shadow of one of the greatest battles of history—one that would decide the future of Europe, of this country and all persons now alive. Our own naval experts, as well as the British, said that some sixty aging American destroyers, now riding sleepily at their moorings along the Atlantic coast, might determine the battle's outcome. They could ensure the maintenance of an effective, unceasing patrol down through the English Channel, at the points where Hitler might be expected to attack. Administration officials thought of the German hordes encamped along the Belgian and French coasts, of our sixty obsolescent destroyers and of the antique wise-crack: "for want of a nail the shoe was lost. . . ."

As far as could be determined, the administration took no tangible step to send the destroyers throbbing eastward, although it was under frantic pressure from powerful pro-Ally groups of private citizens. The sale of the destroyers to Britain, directly or through the agency of middlemen, would be very close to a violation of international law and would certainly be contrary to United States law. The Democratic leadership in Congress is supposed to have warned the White House that the sale of destroyers would provoke a storm in the Senate that would jeopardize the whole armament program. Observers predicted that, as soon as the German attack on England actually occurred, this congressional attitude would shift overnight, that, when it was too late, Congress would authorize the sale of the destroyers in a few hurried hours.

Among United States Army specialists, it seems to be agreed that Hitler's most formidable weapon in an attack on England will be the amphibian tank. A non-military observer, reputed to have excellent unofficial sources of information within Germany, confirms this. He says that Hitler's delay in attacking England is due almost entirely to Hitler's desire to give his men additional training in the handling of amphibians. Under the original German time-table, the French were not expected to collapse as soon as they did; consequently the amphibian brigades were not altogether ready.

If it turns out that amphibian tanks are indeed Hitler's strongest weapon, it will be one of history's meanest tricks. As everyone knows, the British invented the tank; they also perfected an amphibian tank as far back as the First World War. A few amphibians were manufactured, and were to have been used for an attack on the Belgian coast had the war lasted longer. About fifteen years ago, a private British munitions company developed what specialists believe is still probably the ultimate in amphibians. The British Ministry of War, to which it was immediately offered, wasn't interested, so the private munitions company proceeded to offer it to governments all over the world. They are even said to have printed a catalogue giving its specifications. Our military experts believe that this British amphibian is the model of whatever amphibians Hitler now has.

We are unlikely to see any more dramatic proof of the incompatibility of the New Deal and a war economy than the present dispute over Mr. Thurman Arnold's anti-trust suit against the major oil companies. Partly because of their vastness, partly because of their international character, the major oil companies have evaded measures of social control ever since the original dissolution of the Rockefeller trust. Two years ago the TNEC undertook to strip the mystery from the oil industry. It proved to all reasonable observers that the major companies' ownership of pipe-line facilities gave them enormous, irresponsible economic power. In part, Mr. Arnold's current suits are an attempt to make them surrender this power. But within the last few weeks Mr. Stettinius' raw-materials division of the National Advisory Defense Commission has been hard at it persuading these same major oil companies to embark on the manufacture of synthetic rubber, as well as toluol, ingredient of explosives. There is no doubt about it; our dependence on the Malay States for rubber is a grave military weakness. It is vital that we have a synthetic rubber industry. But the representatives of the oil companies say, not unnaturally, that as long as the Department of Justice is crouched to spring at them, they have other things to do. A compromise is now being arranged, according to reports, but it is hard to see what compromise can be reached that will not injure the New Deal's anti-trust policy.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Wall Street in the Doldrums

IT IS WORTH RECORDING that trading on the New York Stock Exchange for July represented the smallest volume since 1918—twenty-two years ago. During a whole month only 7,300,000 shares changed hands. To realize how small this is you need merely be told that it is only one-fifth of the trading in July of last year. Alas, for those glamorous days of 1929 when the market would seldom hit less than four million shares a day. I recall predicting, to the great disgust of the Exchange, that if a crash came, the market might attempt to drive 10,000,000 shares a day through the ticker—which was impossible. That was unthinkable, said the Exchange's economist. When the crack did come the ticker, many hours late, recorded 16,000,000 shares. And later Richard Whitney admitted on the witness stand in Washington that the actual turnover that day was 24,000,000 shares—all over 16,000,000 failed to make the tape. Think of it! More than three times as many shares handled in a single day as passed through the clearing house in the whole month of July.

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One asks: will the stock market come back? Is this lethargy the result of the war? Or is it a natural disintegration of that once great market? It is perhaps a little of both. After all, to find so low a day one must go back to the last war, to a day in 1918. But then the market was a very much smaller affair. The war has upset every trader's calculations. But it is not only the war. The elements that make for stock speculation are not around. Whether they will return or not is difficult to forecast.

Down in Wall Street, of course, you will be told that it is all the fault of the SEC. And a strong movement is under way to use the war as the occasion for relaxing the SEC restrictions, just as that same precious war is used to halt the march of Thurman Arnold against the oil and other trusts.

Of course the SEC law has something to do with the slackness in speculative activity in the market. And that is altogether a good thing. That ancient wheeze about the liquidity of the speculative markets being essential to the financing of industry is being revamped. But there is no foundation for it. It just isn't true. And because it isn't true such limits as the SEC law has imposed on market activities have not in any sense injured business.

But the chief cause of the lethargy of the stock markets is to be found in the fact that conditions for wild speculation or even very active stock speculation are not with us. Nobody invests money any more. Nobody wants to put out any new issues of stocks. The widespread apprehension about the future of people with a few dimes leads them to keep their money in cash or government bonds. Investment is gone for the time being.

It is too soon to say whether or not this will change. It will certainly change a little if the stock exchange people can weaken the very meager restrictions now imposed upon them by law. But there looms ahead the bogey of taxes. The immense outlays for defense and all sorts of things are going to drive the government, whether it wishes it or not —particularly after the election and no matter who is elected—to impose still heavier taxes on those groups which can be taxed with the least political peril. One of them will be the stock speculators.

There is, of course, a strong movement for relaxing the taxes on capital gains. It seems to be making headway. And yet at a time when the small wage-earner and the poor are being made to bear increasingly greater tax burdens—locally as well as nationally—it looks as if there would be little support for lightening the load of taxes upon stock speculations, however good an argument might be made for it. And no good argument can be made for it. If this surmise should be correct the tax obstacle is going to operate as a wet blanket on the market for some time to come.

The simple truth is that there are too many brokers. What we should have is a Brokerage Resettlement Administration to move some of these gentlemen from the pleasant haunts they once reveled in to some other form of industry—farming, perhaps, or to jobs in the munitions plants or into the army or to the race tracks.

It is, meantime, a dreary place, this once merry Wall Street—dull, idle, bewildered, full of pessimism.

JOHN T. FLYNN

Three on the Keyboard

THERE HAVE BEEN a lot of noisy piano showpieces like Liszt's E-Flat Concerto around for a long time, just begging for some exasperated but enterprising musician to swing a long right at them from the floor—which is apparently what Stravinsky had in mind in writing his Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra, the concerto to end piano concertos. It is amusing, explosive and ironical, the product of a gifted genius, but a bored one. In recording it for Victor (M-685, 4 sides; $4.50), Sanromá and the Boston Symphony give the thing a tremendous lift, carrying the note of sardonic bombast from the moment orchestra and piano begin chopping up cunningly instrumented melodic fragments right through to the end where a popular song teeters unsteadily in and the whole thing collapses with a roar—all of it given a razor edge by Sanromá's quick jabs at the bass and discordant swoops up and down the keys. However, you won't have to hear it often to know why Petroushka is still more popular than later works.

You won't have to go any farther than to the first movement of the Brahms Concerto No. 1 in D Minor in search of something to justify a biting satire on piano concertos. It must have been a bad morning when Schnabel and the London Philharmonic gathered to record that concerto for Victor (M-667, 12 parts; $12), because nobody is going to get any medals for it. Schnabel, obviously uninspired and unable to identify himself with the music, delivers a lukewarm performance marred by several slips. The tone of the orchestra (which is usually superb) is very dull, as though it had been recorded in a barn on a muggy morning. Several of the records are wavery, apparently recorded off-center. But it is not a total loss, for things begin to pick up after the first movement, and there are still the beautiful choral passages in the slow movement. You might think that Schnabel, who can play the Emperor Concerto and the Beethoven sonatas like no one else, would sound to better advantage in an expansive work like the Brahms Concerto than in the six little Moments Musicals he has also recorded for Victor (M-684, 6 sides; $6.50). But quite the opposite is the case. In these modest Schubert works he is at his best, treasuring each note in the spacious meditative style that marks him as a great artist. As a result the Schubert is one of the choice albums of the season.

Schnabel has not made the only good piano recording this month, however. On Columbia you can hear Gieseking and the Saxon State Orchestra in a wonderful performance of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto in G Major (M-411, 8 parts; $6). Written side by side with the Fifth Symphony, this concerto contains some of the most hauntingly beautiful passages that Beethoven ever produced. Gieseking is fortunately not given to overstatement. Except in the slow movement, where his fingers seem reluctant to let the sound go, he plays coolly and seemingly without effort—his eye always fixed on the melodic line, which he treats in his own subtle but technically perfect way. The orchestra is good; the recording is one of the happiest. A must.

Symphony No. 104 in D Major ("London"), by Haydn. Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philhar-

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monic Orchestra (Columbia M-409, 6 sides; $5). Another popular Haydn work performed with the same finesse as was to be found in the almost matchless playing of the Haffner Symphony by the same group earlier in the season. When the London Philharmonic is up to form there is no orchestra in Europe that can top it. STANLEY FERGUSON

The Bandwagon

Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh have just returned from their tour in "Romeo and Juliet" which was no great shakes of a play. – *From Louella Parsons' movie column in The New York Journal-American.*

I firmly believe that wars are Nature's way of getting rid of bad people, and as far as I can see, the young men of America deserve to be shot. – *Ethel H. Barrow in a letter in Time.*

Business as Usual

Since the recent recovery of some very sick patients the Hospital is again fairly quiet. – *From The Nantucket, Mass., Inquirer and Mirror.*

Spare the Rod

But this didn't deter him from making $150,000 a year out of his knowledge of the law and property. He is one of Britain's highest-paid barristers. He has, curiously enough, all the acquisitions of a respectable English gentleman; a quaint Tudor mansion at Filkins, Gloucestershire, with many acres of beautiful grounds; an elaborate apartment in one of London's most exclusive districts; a charming wife, four high-spirited children, and a hunting stick. – *News story on Sir Stafford Cripps in PM.*

You Might Think: Too Much to Bear

I rather believe when a fellow is in love and wants the girl for himself he will come right out and tell her in just so many words. His silence may be golden to him as it doesn't commit him to anything, but it sure is leaden to the girl.

What do you think about such a silence?

Special exercises which you may follow with your doctor's permission will be found in the leaflet "After the Baby Comes." – *From George Antheil's column in The Toronto (Canada) Daily Star.*

Hot or Cold?

WILLKIE IN HIS BATHTUB MEETS RUNNING MATE. – *Headline in The New York Daily News.*

Father, Dear Father, Come Home to Me Now

Polygamy, which in prospect seemed a dangerous topic [in the making of the movie "Brigham Young"], presented no difficulties because it was treated matter-of-factly. The only Mormon objection to the scenario involved a scene which indicated that Brigham Young had not visited one of his wives for six months. The time was changed to two months, at Mormon request because they felt the scene was a slur on their forefather's matrimonial enthusiasm. – *From The New York Sunday Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Cold, Cold Ground

SIR: Your readers might be interested in knowing that there is a practice and custom in the South of depriving Negroes of their property through subterfuge. In many communities of the South, Negroes own property which becomes enhanced in value by either a real-estate development or expansion of business areas.

In many cases Negro property owners refuse to sell their property for low prices and in other cases they are not requested to sell.

But through coöperation with local tax officials, the Negroes owning the property are not sent tax bills on their property. The owners, most of whom are unfamiliar with legal procedure, believe that they have to get a tax bill before they can be held liable for taxes.

When they do not receive those tax bills they do not pay their taxes. Others inquire about the tax bills and are either not given any information or are put off with the statement that "everything is all right."

When the taxes are past due and are in arrears for the statutory period, the property is quietly sold at a tax sale without notice to the owners. The Negroes are not notified until after the statutory period of redemption has passed. They are then forced to leave the property.

This method is almost completely within the letter of the law although it violates the spirit of the law. Statutes differ in the several states. The Negro owners seldom consult a lawyer until after the period of redemption has passed after which time they are without legal redress.

THURGOOD MARSHALL,
New York City Special Counsel, NAACP

Sitting on Defense

SIR: The symposium on "A National Policy for Defense" published in your July 1 issue, in spite of the galaxy of able writers, seemed in the face of the real issue now uppermost in many minds mere shadow boxing. All of these writers seem to agree that the defeat of Britain without much more aid than she is now getting is probable and that such a defeat will have cataclysmic effects on the United States. But, nevertheless, they proceed calmly to discuss what we can do to defend ourselves after the British navy, as our only solid ramparts of defense in both the Atlantic and Pacific, has been destroyed without once raising the obvious question: Would immediate military aid to Britain prevent her defeat and capitulation to the Axis Powers and would such aid be the least costly and least risky policy?

It is evident from reading the several articles either that their authors felt the restraint of editorial policy which limited their discussion to measures of defense short of involvement in the present war or that they are still obsessed with the hope of "peace for our time," provided we make elaborate enough preparation for defense and otherwise mind our own business. At any rate they must be credited with sufficient understanding of the present situation to realize that what we would defend, Ger-

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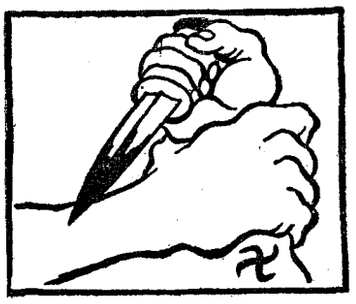
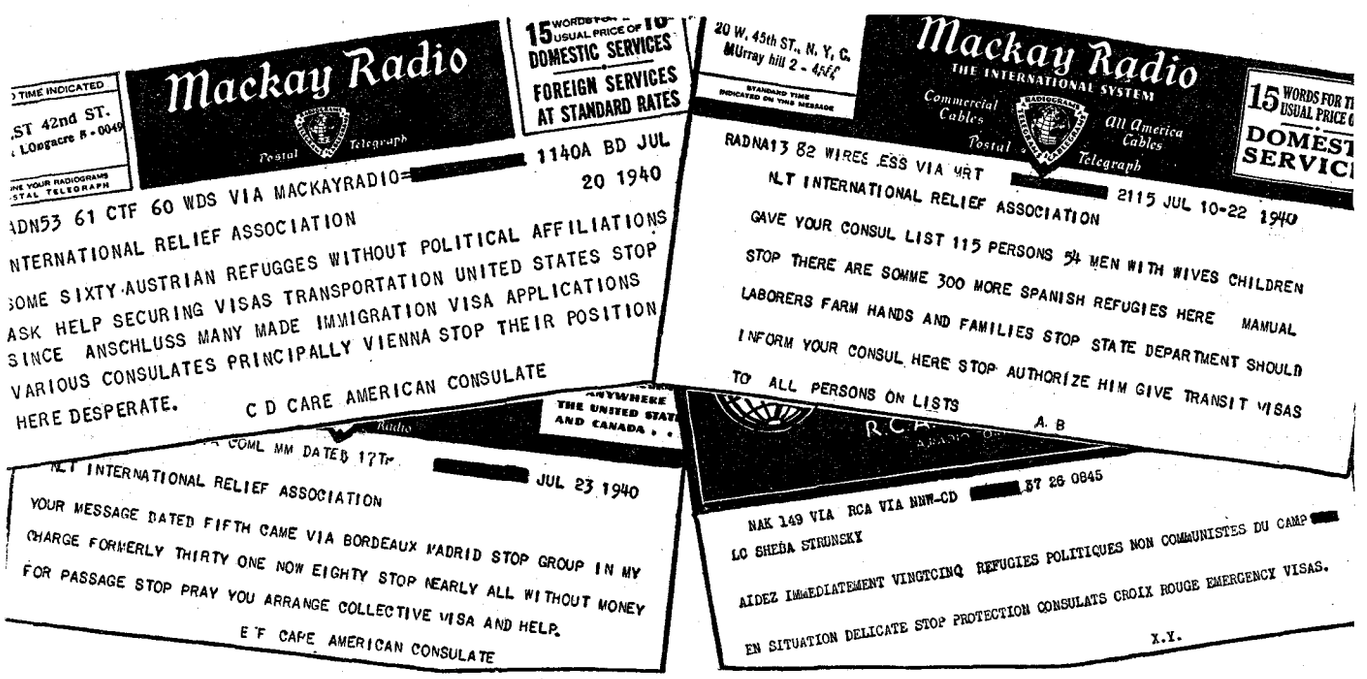


Save the "FIRST COLUMN"!

You made it possible for these valiant fighters against fascism to escape the Nazi firing squad—so far. Now you must help them over the last barrier to liberty.

The International Relief Association has received, during the last month, over twenty cables each representing groups of from 5 to 415 people. The four cables that follow are from Spaniards, Austrians, Czechs and Germans


Mackay Radio
Postal Telegraph
15 WORDS FOR USUAL PRICE OF 10
DOMESTIC SERVICES
FOREIGN SERVICES AT STANDARD RATES
1140A BD JUL 20 1940
ADN53 61 CTF 60 WDS VIA MACKAYRADIO
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SOME SIXTY AUSTRIAN REFUGGES WITHOUT POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS
ASK HELP SECURING VISAS TRANSPORTATION UNITED STATES STOP
SINCE ANSCHLUSS MANY MADE IMMIGRATION VISA APPLICATIONS
VARIOUS CONSULATES PRINCIPALLY VIENNA STOP THEIR POSITION
HERE DESPERATE. C D CARE AMERICAN CONSULATE
20 W. 45th ST., N. Y. C.
MUrray hill 2-4566
Mackay Radio
THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM
Commercial Cables
All America Cables
Postal Telegraph
15 WORDS FOR USUAL PRICE
DOMESTIC SERVICE
RADNA13 82 WIRELESS VIA WRT 2115 JUL 10-22 1940
NLT INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION
GAVE YOUR CONSUL LIST 115 PERSONS 34 MEN WITH WIVES CHILDREN
STOP THERE ARE SOMME 300 MORE SPANISH REFUGIES HERE MAMUAL
LABORERS FARM HANDS AND FAMILIES STOP STATE DEPARTMENT SHOULD
INFORM YOUR CONSUL HERE STOP AUTHORIZE HIM GIVE TRANSIT VISAS
TO ALL PERSONS ON LISTS
A. B
THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
JUL 23 1940
NLT INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION
YOUR MESSAGE DATED FIFTH CAME VIA BORDEAUX MADRID STOP GROUP IN MY
CHARGE FORMERLY THIRTY ONE NOW EIGHTY STOP NEARLY ALL WITHOUT MONEY
FOR PASSAGE STOP PRAY YOU ARRANGE COLLECTIVE VISA AND HELP.
E F CARE AMERICAN CONSULATE
NAK 149 VIA RCA VIA NNW-CD 37 26 0845
LC SHEBA STRUNSKY
AIDEZ IMMEDIATEMENT VINGTCINQ REFUGIES POLITIQUES NON COMMUNISTES DU CAMP
EN SITUATION DELICATE STOP PROTECTION CONSULATS CROIX ROUGE EMERGENCY VISAS.
X.Y.

(Points of origin and names deleted, but all from unoccupied territories. The 25 refugees referred to in the cable from X Y has now reached 55.)

Among these refugees are brave names that you would know. All of them are tried anti-fascists, known to the republican representatives of their former countries. We have brought them part of the way to safety—we cannot let them be pulled back to destruction

You are one of our rescue squad—every day counts

PLEASE GIVE NOW!!

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION

Founded by

Albert Einstein — Helen Stoecker
Carl von Ossietzky — Eduard Fuchs
Heinrich Mann — Ernst Toller

Charles A. Beard, *Honorary Chairman*
Sterling D. Spero, *Vice-Chairman*
Freda Kirchwey, *Treasurer*
Sheba Strunsky, *Executive Secretary*

FREDA KIRCHWEY, *Treasurer*
International Relief Association, Inc.
2 West 43rd Street, New York City

I herewith contribute $..... toward saving political refugees.

Name.....

Address.....

.....NR 8-12

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many, Italy and Japan want to the point of risking a war for—otherwise there would be no sense in incurring great expense to defend them.

They, of course, know, although nowhere in their articles do they mention the fact, that unless the Axis Powers are held in check by the British navy for another two years or more our feverish and extensive war preparations will be regarded as direct threats to them and so the very reason why they will start a preventive war against us. The thought of participation eventually in a terrible war, which doubtless troubles the minds of the writers of this symposium, hovers, therefore, like an unbidden ghost over their intellectual feast and makes all their fine-spun theorizing sound like whistling to keep their teeth from chattering.

Bates College, Lewiston, Me. MURRAY CARROLL

Liberal Catholics a Minority

SIR: Mr. Serri's letter to The New Republic [July 22] was of great interest to me. It strengthens my conviction that we are making a dangerous mistake to ignore the fascism of the Roman Catholic Church because certain liberal Catholics oppose fascism.

In Spain we saw that the liberal Catholics were as cruelly persecuted by Francoists as any other liberals were. Suppose, then, that in the United States it came to a showdown between liberalism and fascism. Does any thoughtful person believe that the presence of a few liberal Catholics could prevent the alliance of the Roman Church with fascism?

Apologists for the Church forget that we have only its record by which to judge it. That record in Spain, Italy and Portugal was one of prompt coalition with fascism.

We are sincere in our admiration for Catholics who stanchly support the democracy which has given them opportunities they could never have had in Southern Europe. But we should be naïve indeed to shut our eyes to what has happened abroad, and expect a minority of liberal Catholics to save us from fascism here.

Wilmington, Del. D. D. ELLIOT

Book Unreviewed

SIR: Your review of "Canada, Europe and Hitler," by Watson Kirkconnell is so false in fact that the comment makes nonsense. (See the July 15 issue, page 93, "A Reader's List.")

You say this book "is an analysis of the editorial opinion of the Canadian press." It is in fact an analysis of the attitudes expressed in the *foreign-language press* of Canada—quite a different matter. And most particularly an analysis of those newspapers and periodicals which are neither French nor English, as French is not a "foreign" language in Canada, the country being constitutionally bilingual. Mr. Kirkconnell's book is a careful study not only of the newspapers and periodicals in the German, Ukrainian, Icelandic, Norwegian and other languages, but also of the attitudes and activities of about thirty or more foreign, non-French elements, largely settled in solid blocks and retaining their own languages for domestic and social speech; and hence very little known to other Canadians, although they are a numerically important part of the population.

To suggest as you do that this book threshes old straw of French-English factions—with which it is not concerned at all—is worse than no notice at all. . . . Many readers draw the distinct inference from Mr. Kirkconnell's quotations that the book reveals Ukrainian potentialities which, together with the known ability of the Ukrainians to force French-Canadian native elements out of residence and political influence, in areas outside Quebec, may result in driving the native French and English closer together than ever before.

Uplands, Victoria, B. C. E. H. DAVIDSON

From The New Republic Mail Bag

The issue of July 1 came in for a thorough cross-examination by John R. Miller of Poughkeepsie, who says our editorial on the surrender of France sounds like an indictment of the victim for the terms on which he allowed himself to be murdered. "The time France could have obtained better terms was after the battle of the Meuse or that of Flanders. She chose to go on fighting. She is entitled to respect and admiration." Mr. Miller: there is little enough we can say that would be adequate to our feeling of respect and admiration for those who fought for the French nation. Our editorial described those in France who fought on the other side.

Marjorie Fischer of New York City sends us transcripts from letters written by anti-fascists in France—for some of whom relief may be now too late, as the inmates of Camp le Vernet were about to be turned over to Hitler more than two weeks ago. Some still have a chance, however; the thing to do is write the State Department requesting that emergency visas and consular asylum be made available. . . . A League of Non-Citizens ("to defend humanity by aiding the United States") has been formed with headquarters in Washington, D. C., at 1013 National Press Building. Those eligible—non-citizen legal residents—take an oath to adhere to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and their aim is to render the United States "the maximum coöperation."

Anne Pound of New York City doubts the value of sending American convoys to bring over English children. In answer to our statement that "neither Germany nor Italy would dare sink an American vessel on the high seas carrying a cargo of children," she says maybe so. But mightn't England dare?

In our issue of June 15 we published a letter from Marna Leigh outlining for us the task of tracing and reporting the exact use of money for "defense." Frances M. Trinkaus wishes to second Miss Leigh's motion, and adds a rider: How about the billions we've already spent on armaments? "It's mighty hard for the average citizen to find out just how tax money is spent."

American Youth Hostels, Inc., wonders how many know of the facilities offered young summer travelers by their 240 establishments (mostly in New England, Long Island and along the Appalachian trail). Twenty-five cents a night to those with a $1 pass ($2 for all over twenty-one), but bring your own sleeping pack and utensils. Motorists not allowed. National headquarters: Northfield, Massachusetts.

Emily Dembitz of Louisville, Kentucky, suggests there should be more spade-calling: "How does it happen that writers in our most liberal publications so carefully avoid the use of the words capitalism and socialism?" Good lord, do they? Miss Dembitz believes "capitalism has collapsed," but her last line violates her own semantic rule: "There is no reason why the idea of a planned economy should carry with it a ban on personal liberty." The italics are yours.

S. Burns Watson, Ohio administrator of the Federal Security Agency of the FYA, was discouraged by the tone of Irwin Ross's article on youth (July 15), which seemed to him symptomatic of a widespread lack of real convictions about democracy (his own group is trying to find techniques by which to awake such convictions as he is sure are there, but sleeping for lack of leadership). About the article he said: "A rereading leaves me with a feeling that it says Yes and No, and offers opinions supported by very few facts." . . . Alex Barbour of Detroit says that the idea of young and working men charging off to war at Professor Schuman's behest would be easier to take if it weren't for the thought of the Professor sitting around after the young men were blasted, writing long paid articles explaining why the war was a mistake.

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Books in Review

In Memoriam

THE REPORT of the third American Writers' Congress has finally appeared. "Fighting Words"[1] is the title of it, and Donald Ogden Stewart is the man who put it together, from jottings and dog's-eared manuscript of the speeches. Coming when it does, more than a year after the congress was held, the book has the air of being a memorial to someone or something that has died; and like most memorial volumes it is unlikely to have many readers. That is a pity, for the congress was an extraordinary affair and Mr. Stewart has managed in 168 pages to suggest its diversity and excitement.

If I have any quarrel with him, it is about the emphasis revealed in his title. To call the speeches at the congress "Fighting Words" is to hint that they were chiefly concerned with exhorting writers to come down out of the ivory tower and join in the battle. But the ivory tower in 1939 was only a memory and a greatly overworked metaphor. Most writers having joined in the battle already, the exhortation had become a simple statement of fact. That explains why the congress was much more interesting than if it had been merely a chance to deliver fighting speeches. Because its aims could be taken for granted, there was time to discuss methods of presenting them to a wider audience. Some of the liveliest sessions were those devoted to the technique of writing for the radio, writing for the screen and collecting folklore; one of the liveliest papers was a plea for understanding the true-story magazines. On all these subjects, Mr. Stewart does a good job of reporting. There was, however, another feature of the congress that he somewhat neglects; it was the number of foreign authors present—visitors from France, England, Denmark; exiles from Germany, Spain and Czecho-Slovakia. One could be sure that speeches at the congress were being heard beyond our borders.

It was, as I said, an extraordinary affair, perhaps the greatest achievement of the League of American Writers. Reading about it today, one feels that it belongs not only to another year but to another historical period, to the time when the people's front still existed, even after Munich and Barcelona, and the future still belonged to the men of good will. In the black 1940's such a congress probably could not be assembled; certainly it could not be held under the same auspices, with the same participants. As for the League of American Writers, it has outlived most of the other people's-front organizations, largely because of its valuable work in helping exiled authors, but it has now reverted to purely political discussions and has lost a whole section of its membership.

The same week that Mr. Stewart's book appeared, half a dozen members withdrew from the executive board of the League. In a sense these resignations were only the latest in a long series that included the honorary president, Thomas Mann, and four of the ten vice-presidents. They meant, however, that there was no longer any hope of changing the League's policy. Reflecting on what had happened, I decided reluctantly to follow the example of the others. My letter to the executive secretary is perhaps worth quoting, since it helps to explain the divisions not only in the League but in everything else that survives from the people's front.

"There is," I wrote in part, "a great deal more to be said about the issue involved in the recent resignations. That issue has been misunderstood and often misstated, chiefly because it cuts so deep. It is not fundamentally a question of party loyalties and hostilities; all the resigning members had shown their willingness to coöperate with any political group, so long as it was clearly working toward the same immediate aims. Nor is it a question of whether this country should keep out of the present war; nobody in the League has been calling for an American Expeditionary Force. The real question is what the war means in the light of yesterday and tomorrow, and what steps this country should take to defend itself.

"One theory is that the war in Europe is merely a struggle for colonies and markets, another conflict 'between rival imperialisms.' According to this theory, Chamberlain and Daladier were as bad as Hitler; Churchill today is almost as bad; and we should therefore remain neutral not only in deed but also in thought. Even if Hitler wins an absolute victory, even if he seizes the British navy, the United States will not be threatened unless it chooses to fight for imperialistic aims, and in that case it deserves to be beaten. Money spent for defense, besides being wasted, is an incitement to war and a means of strengthening the fascists at home. This theory—and I hope I have stated it fairly—is now the general line of the Communist Party, though it has also been accepted by many non-Communists. The League is not a Communist organization, but this is the line it has chosen to follow.

"The other theory, held by most of those who have resigned from the League, is that the war in Europe is essentially a civil war, fought to decide what class will rule the world, under what forms of government. According to this theory, the United States is morally in the war —indeed, has been in it since it began nine years ago with the invasion of Manchuria, or four years ago with the revolt in Spain. The question whether we should now oppose Germany with our armed forces is therefore strategical rather than moral. The best strategical arguments, as of August, 1940, seem to be in favor of keeping our armed forces at home. But the ultimate issue of war or peace cannot be decided by the American public, even after it has listened to hundreds of pacifist speeches delivered by intellectuals trying to act as if they were at home on the soap box. Hitler is the man who will make the decision, and if we want him to decide for peace we had better prove to him that war against us would be a costly undertaking.

[1] Fighting Words, edited by Donald Ogden Stewart. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 168 pages. $1.50.

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"This is the theory that I think comes nearer to meeting the facts of the case, for all their apparent complexities. Everything about this war has been vastly and deliberately confused, and for a simple reason, namely, that one of the best ways to attack any democracy is to spread confusion. Yet no one could read Hitler's or Mussolini's speeches, which mean a great deal of what they say; no one could reflect on the maneuvers that led to the defeat of France without realizing that this is indeed a civil war and a struggle for something more than colonies or markets. The minds of men are being seized as well as their possessions. Marshal Pétain wants to abolish the French Revolution, that is, the whole nineteenth century. Hitler says that he wants to revoke the Peace of Westphalia, that is, the treaties recognizing the Protestant Reformation. This country was born out of reformation and revolution; even more than the British Empire it is the conquest at which the fascists must ultimately aim if they want to keep what they have conquered already.

"The present policy of the League," I continued, "seems calculated to weaken this country's power of resistance. For that policy there might be effective arguments, from the point of view of those who believe that a world proletarian revolution is just around the corner. Apparently some theorists of the Communist International are convinced that fascism is really a movement forward, the next step along the road to universal socialism, and the sooner the 'pluto-democracies' are overthrown, the sooner all nations can be reorganized into world soviets. If that is what they think, they ought to say so. Instead they have been preaching the sort of sentimental pacifism they have always despised, as Bolsheviks. Their present theory about the 'imperialist war' is plausible enough to persuade women's peace societies and kiddie-book writers, but it has little relation to what is actually happening in Europe. And in any case, the League is not supposed to be an organization devoted to the world proletarian revolution."

It was hard for me to write the letter. I had helped to organize the League, in 1935, and had been one of its vice-presidents since the beginning. The work that anyone does for an organization helps to keep him loyal, even after he begins to question its aims. But I have come to feel that the League is doing more to confuse American democracy than to defend it. "Back in the days," I said, "when the League was fighting fascism, I thought I knew its friends and its enemies; the latter were all those who favored appeasement abroad and reaction at home. Now it has joined company with the appeasers and even the reactionaries. The political statements it has issued during the past few months—statements it had no call or capacity for making—could be read by Father Coughlin over the radio. They could be quoted by Henry Ford as an excuse for not making airplane motors. They are essentially the same statements that are being made by Colonel Lindbergh and by those members of the Catholic hierarchy who led the attack against the Spanish republic. With the change of a few words, they could appear on the editorial page of The Chicago Tribune, The New York American, Social Justice or even The Brooklyn Tablet. The League has never agreed with these men or these papers before. If it wants to agree with them now, I can no longer agree or work with the League."

MALCOLM COWLEY

Farmers in the Red

Why Farmers Are Poor: The Agricultural Crisis in the United States, by Anna Rochester. New York: International Publishers. 317 pages. $2.75.

THE SAME disciplined fire and brilliance with which in her previous book, "The Rulers of America," Miss Rochester examined monopolies, she now applies to the spectacle of commercial agriculture and rural poverty in the United States. A Marxian economist, she works from a declared preconception. She builds up her case item by item, with an air of scholarly coolness; anger and compassion beat through her presentation and bring her book to life on every page.

She shows first that even in the "good" years most American farmers were poor. Even in 1929 one-quarter of our farming families made less than $600 a year, gross. Even then, the great change had struck: land values which for more than a century had steadily risen had turned down. It was no longer possible for farmers, big and little, to lose at farming and rack their land yet win at real-estate speculation. And land, even then, was passing into strong hands, fast.

Raising surplus human young stock for the cities, along with cheap food surpluses, had helped to skin and thin the topsoil. The flood of the unemployed landward from 1929 onward put heavier burdens on exhausted fields. "Subsistence" farming became an anchor of hope in this land of the free. "Subsistence farming means . . . destitution," says Miss Rochester, "unless it is merely a part-time supplement to other well paid, part-time employment. Small farmers cannot make a decent living from commercial farming." In this I think she is right, and I wish she had said more that would link the retreat toward subsistence, food at hand, with the fact, elsewhere recorded, that farmers get around six billion dollars a year for what they sell, and consumers pay around twelve billion dollars for it. Few people who used to be able to meet store bills like "hand to mouth" or "back to the backhouse," as they call subsistence farming. But there has seemed to many no other choice.

Somewhere in a scrapbook I have preserved a clipping from the financial page of The New York Times in the month of March, 1933. "Food and Tobacco Lead in Earnings," the headline said; and it did not refer to prices paid at the farm but to dividends paid by big processors and distributors. When Miss Rochester enters here with her statistical scalpel into her special field, monopoly, she brings forth findings for years half-hidden in chilly governmental tables and makes them buzz and sting. Her penetration of the fog that until lately has hung around the acreage of foreclosed farmland is masterly. In a few paragraphs she rips off the property overalls in which the Associated Farmers stand to claim they represent small farmers. She deals in greater detail, but as effectively, with the milk-dispensing corporations and the plump "coöperative" leaders who have decided to sit in on the overstuffed chairs with the big boys and play it that way.

All this has an oldtime Populist ring, and I like it. If I have any set politics at all, I guess I am a Populist. But that Farmer-Labor plank in the People's Party Platform of 1892, which Miss Rochester cites with hope, never got

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much beyond the plank stage. And I doubt if even now, with people who used to call themselves farmers being dispossessed and driven to the status of hired hands, the breach is likely soon to close. "I've been a hired hand all my life," an old man in Illinois lately told me. "But I've always voted as if I owned a good half-section of land."

A social ownership of racked or useless land, forced back by default into the hands of the government, has for years been proceeding so rapidly as to embarrass land planners and administrators in Washington and in the states. Will fruitful land come back in the same way to social control? I think it likely; and the question of tenure and subsistence—the right to a little place on earth, a spot of soil still workable, however low the cash reward—seems to me the next phase of agricultural adjustment that any party—Left, Right or Middle—must reckon with most closely in the next few years. Finally, I don't think that most of the big landowners are getting as fat, beating the land and the help, as Miss Rochester's presentation implies. Not permanently fat, anyway. The same forces she cites as draining the land and the persons of the little fellows are working on the big ones too.

RUSSELL LORD

Too Much Abstraction

In What Hour, by Kenneth Rexroth. New York: The Macmillan Company. 83 pages. $1.75.

THE MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS of modernity weighs heavily on some people, in whose speech lingo has a tendency to prevail over language. So it is, sometimes, with Kenneth Rexroth. For example:

> Chaperon of a neural frazzle, frayed
> In a confusion of multiple demands,
> Finds, bright in native reflex,
> Awareness tired with waiting; saying,
> "Wisdom has been wished
> On us. We who wrought an accurate
> Exhaustive positivism, having
> Constructed a submarine apparatus
> Of unique causation, arise
> To an unexpected traumatic
> Pacific shallow."

Need it be said that such writing (and there is a good deal of it in these eighty-three pages) must seem to many readers unpoetic and tiresome?

Mr. Rexroth himself has been confused by attendance on multiple demands. At his best, he is a simple-minded man, with a liking for outdoors, in particular the high Sierra, and a decent reverence for nature and the stars. Of these he writes well; his observation is direct and immediate, leading him to the true line—"The stone is clean as light, the light steady as stone"—and to happy images:

> Orion walks waist deep in the fog coming in from the ocean;
> Leo crouches on the hills.
> There are tiny hard fruits already on the plum trees.
> The purity of the apple blossoms is incredible.
> As the wind dies down their fragrance
> Clusters around them like thick smoke.
> All the day they roared with bees, in the moonlight
> They are silent and immaculate.

Mr. Rexroth's other aspect, the erudite indoor ponderer over many and difficult texts, is less deserving of encouragement. What good (poetically) does all this do? What profit is there in learning to say "the stream cuts new *sinuosities* in the meadow"? What is there about the word so much better than *curves* or *loops*? or, while you are about it, *anfractuosities, ambages, helices, rundles, scollops,* and *sigmoids* (Roget)? Some of these might be worse, to be sure, and some a good deal better: it is not merely a matter of taste. Or is it?

In one of the poems, Mr. Rexroth confesses to an excessive familiarity with the encyclopedia, or at least the Gic-to-Har volume, "It seems I have read everything in it." For his poetry's sake he would be well advised to forget it; to follow Agassiz *(Study nature, not books),* to quit the ornithological article in favor of the actual crimson grosbeak, and to beat out of his head the idea that the abstractions, whether simple or involute, are the serviceable material of poetic art.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Novels Just for Reading

The Death of Lord Haw Haw, by Brett Rutledge. New York: Random House. $2.
Geese in the Forum, by Lawrence Edward Watkin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.
Piano in the Band, by Dale Curran. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.

"THE DEATH OF LORD HAW HAW" is an excitement piece you will not want to miss. It takes the case of the fabulous Englishman who raised so much hell with anti-German morale in the early days of the war, and it tracks him down by the half-deduction, half-funny-coincidence procedure of detective fiction. The tracker is a free-lance American, a graduate of the World War Black Chamber, enlisted for the job by the French Intelligence. For convenience sake, the story assumes the transmission point to be outside Germany; for the story's sake, convenience in apprehension is now very scarce, and now very convenient indeed.

No use spoiling it for you with more details. The author (Brett Rutledge is a pseudonym) knows something of Intelligence procedure, Paris, New York restaurants and world affairs. More important, he knows how to make fiction. There are many varied characters in the book, if no actual people, and the ins and outs of their affairs are kept in a nice steady line and moving forward. The only thing against the book is that it is so thorough and knowing as it outlines the problem, there is a certain sense of letdown in the fictional shifts leading to the climax. But the only thing to be said against it is said after it's finished, for you don't stop reading till then. And for a book whose emphasis is less on who done it than on why, that isn't saying anything against it after all.

"Geese in the Forum" is a nice book to take home just for reading. The story by anybody else would hardly be worth holding a book up in front of you—which is the definition of a story that has something anyway. A young fellow gets his first teaching job in a small-town college in his native South. His bride is a rich Yankee and a little too

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much. She gets a boy friend and he recovers an old girl friend in the course of the year—but the main stuff is about new and old board meetings and stuffed exhibits of the wrong but prevalent type of department head. And so while you don't actually get acquainted with anybody special you have a fine background picture and urbane statement of faculty intimacies and troubles that is a little spicy, a little benevolent, a little acid, and quite a little earnest for truth and justice.

Dale Curran goes into a country still new ground for fiction, and so the interest of "Piano in the Band" is that of both a passable novel and a traveler's report. He takes a jazz band that is a mixture of Goodman, Whiteman, Ted Lewis and nothing on earth; uses a gal vocalist for love (and eventually murder) interest; and around the characters of several good men and a driving leader tells the story of a group of men who live in music, and are made or broken by it. Except for a flashback in the life of the pianist from whose effort to get square with himself the reader learns about the problems of music, the locales are typical: rehearsal hall, one-nighter, stage show and backstage, the all-night session with friends and the dull interminable rooms of cheap hotels. The writing is straightforward and the music sounds pretty good; it makes fair sense and enjoyable reading. As such, recommended.

OTIS FERGUSON

Patient

I Go Horizontal, by Duff Gilfond. New York: Vanguard Press. 281 pages. $2.50.

HERE IS an unusual story, and a true one, written with common sense, courage and grim humor, by a woman journalist who for ten years has been the victim of a rare disease popularly known as sleeping sickness. One morning in November, 1930, Mrs. Gilfond (author of a wickedly clever book about Calvin Coolidge) woke up with a headache for the first time in her life. That was the beginning of a long agony, mental as well as physical, for the headache, which she reticently calls "The Cloud," didn't go away. It deepened into racking recurrent pains that gave her no alternative but to "go horizontal," while brain specialists were adding uncertainty and exasperation to her suffering by an expensive inability even to diagnose it.

If you are looking for a book about the spiritual benefits of long illnesses, this isn't it. It wasn't that kind of disease. But if you doubt the capacity of human beings to *endure*—for a maddeningly long and indefinite period—not only pain but the frustration of nearly every normal wish, this is a book that proves that capacity. And proves it magnificently, for every page was written under "The Cloud"—and yet nearly every page is funny. The unconscious arrogance of well people toward the sick, the impassive juggernaut of hospital red tape and the failures and inconsistencies of doctors—Mrs. Gilfond manages to see them all as ludicrous. And they *are* ludicrous, grotesquely so, seen in relation to indescribable suffering. The author's wit at the expense of the medical tradition may seem malicious at times, but only to the disgustingly healthy.

REBECCA PITTS

A Reader's List

General

THE GHOST OF ROYAL OAK, by Father William C. Kernan (Free Speech Forum, $1). A critical consideration of Father Coughlin and his goings-on, by a Newark priest whose attitude seems that of a solid, honest Christian.

SHRINE OF THE SILVER DOLLAR, by John Spivak (Modern Age, $2). A documented exposé of the famed Voice of Royal Oak, by America's most resourceful reporter. The book goes into Coughlin's financial manipulations and other "activities . . . of which even the Roman Catholic Church knows little." Of special interest now that Coughlin is about to resume his broadcasts.

UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN BUSINESS, by Humphrey B. Neill and Howard M. Cool (Macmillan, $2.50). A textbook for secondary schools which gives a functional picture of how American business operates. Suggested and presumably sponsored by the National Better Business Bureau, it is one long huzzah for the point of view of big business. In how many schools will it be made required reading?

Belles Lettres

THE ORDEAL OF BRIDGET ELIA: A Chronicle of the Lambs, by Ernest C. Ross (Oklahoma, $2.50). A concise and sympathetic study of Charles and Mary Lamb which emphasizes Mary's part in the touching life of "double-singleness," but runs more heavily to dates than to interpretation. Brief peeps at the greats of the English romantic movement (Coleridge, Wordsworth, etc.) and a chart that records Mary's attacks of insanity.

FROM DONNE TO DRYDEN, by Robert Lathrop Sharp (North Carolina, $3). A discerning, though humorless, analysis of poetic form from the subjective Metaphysicals to the more detached and realistic Neo-Classicists—a process demonstrated by countless quotations. The author, a scholar speaking to scholars or poets, soberly and pointedly describes how poetic style and thought changed concurrently with social changes.

ROMANTICISM IN AMERICA, edited by George Boas (Johns Hopkins, $2.25). The dead religion of Romanticism lives again in these smart essays. Some of the saints invoked (or devils exorcised) are melodrama, sentimental fiction, Godey's Lady's Book, Thomas Cole's passionate nature painting, Wagneresque music by Heinrich, the philosophies of Emerson and vegetarian Bronson Alcott. A lively wake for the grandparents of American culture.

Fiction

ANYA, by Joy Davidman (Macmillan, $250). Anya, or the reason eyebrows are raised in a Ukrainian village of seventy years ago. While good Jewish girls peek demurely from behind closed shutters, Anya flaunts trinkets from a Russian colonel. A careful portrait of a sensitive woman and also a first-rate reproduction of the Orthodox folklore that helped the Tsar keep walls around the Ghetto.

SMALL POTATOES, by Emily Muir (Scribner's, $2.50). The Maine coast in summer and a fourteen-year-old boy. No real story here, but a refreshing series of days outdoors—mowing and fishing and berrying and plain growing up. Read it for the smell of salt water and the tang of harvest and the taste of lobster caught within the hour.

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